



*His Late Most Gracious Majesty.  
George the Fourth.  
&c. &c. &c.*

*Engraved by THOMSON, from a Miniature by HAINES*

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# LA BELLE ASSEMBLÉE,

FOR AUGUST, 1830.

## ILLUSTRATIVE MEMOIR OF HIS LATE MAJESTY, GEORGE THE FOURTH.

BEFORE we enter upon the history which it has become our duty to submit to our readers, it may be necessary, or at least desirable, to devote a few lines to an investigation of the origin and fortunes of the ancient and illustrious house of Brunswick. From George the First, and his father, the first elector of Hanover, we ascend to the first Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburgh, who, in the thirteenth century, received his investiture from Frederick the Second. "The ancestors of this distinguished person," observes Gibbon, "had been invested with the powerful Duchies of Bavaria and Saxony, which extended far beyond their limits in modern geography; from the Baltic Sea to the confines of Rome they were obeyed, or respected, or feared; and in the quarrels of the Guelphs and Gibellines, the former appellation was derived from the name of their progenitors in the female line. But the genuine masculine descent of the Princes of Brunswick must be explored beyond the Alps; the venerable tree which has since overshadowed Germany and Britain, was planted in an Italian soil." The first founders of the race were the Marquises of Este, of Liguria, and perhaps of Tuscany. The primitive stem

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was divided, in the eleventh century, into two branches; the elder migrating to the banks of the Danube and the Elbe, and the younger adhering to the neighbourhood of the Adriatic. The descendants of the second were the Dukes of Ferrara and Modena; the offspring of the first are the Dukes of Brunswick and the Kings of Great Britain.

Boniface, the Bavarian, Count or Governor of Lucca, was the father of the Marquises of Tuscany, and the first probable ancestor of the house of Este and Brunswick. His memory has been preserved in an old charter of the reign of Charlemagne. His descendants, in process of time, by intermarriages with the Guelphish line (derived from the Scythians, who being driven by the Goths from the mouth of the Danube, erected a kingdom upon the borders of Germany) the line of Billung (Hermannus Billung was created Duke of Saxony in the year 960) and the line of Witekind the Great (the last elected King of the Saxons, who in 782 was dispossessed of a great part of his territories by Charles the Great of France) blended the house of Este with these several lines. Henry Leo, who united all these houses, died in 1195. In

1662, Ernest Augustus, Bishop of Osnaburgh, acceded to the Hanoverian dominions, and first established the right of primogeniture, by abolishing the custom which had been till then adopted, of dividing the patrimonial lands among the several sons. George Lewis, the son of this Prince, succeeded to the throne of Great Britain on the death of Queen Anne.

His late Majesty, George the Fourth, whose life was as glorious, and whose death has been as deeply deplored, as any that ever swayed the sceptre of these realms, was the eldest son of George the Third, and Sophia Charlotte, of Mecklenburgh Strelitz. He was born in St. James's Palace, on the 12th of August, 1762. He inherited a right to the Duchy of Cornwall, as first born of the King; and was hereditary Steward of Scotland, Duke of Rothsay, Earl of Carrick, and Baron of Renfrew, as heir-apparent to the crown of Great Britain. In addition to these titles, he was created, a few days after his birth, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester.

On the 13th of September following, he was baptised with much pomp, but with a greater degree of privacy than forms of state prescribe, by the names of George Augustus Frederick.

When only three years of age, the Prince of Wales received an address, presented by the Society of Ancient Britons, to which, in a few words, he replied. In the year 1771 he was removed from Kew, and a separate establishment was formed for him at the Queen's palace; Lord Bruce being appointed his governor, and Dr. Markham and Dr. Cyril Jackson undertaking the task of tuition. The system of education thus laid down, which was perhaps somewhat too rigid and exclusive, was five years afterwards entirely changed; when the Duke of Montague succeeded to the office of Lord Bruce, and the task of developing the royal mind was confided to Bishop Hurd and Mr. Arnold. Under these able men, the Prince's education embraced many advantages. Not only the dead languages, but German, French, and Italian, were early familiar to him. He evinced a natural taste for polite literature, and made considerable progress in the principles of mathematical and natural science. To

an acute judgment in the fine arts, he united a taste for music, in which he early made proficiency, and a fondness for which accompanied him through life: while the beauty of his person, the condescending frankness of his manners, and the amiable and generous qualities of his heart, endeared him not only to his family, but to the nation at large, and stamped him as one of the most accomplished Princes of his age.

When, in 1783, His Royal Highness reached his majority, a message from the King prepared the House of Commons to grant him a suitable income, and a sum sufficient for the formation of an establishment appropriate to his station. A grant of £60,000., in addition to an income of £50,000. per annum, was immediately voted. This sum, as it soon afterwards appeared, was quite inadequate to his expenses; and three years had scarcely elapsed before the Prince was compelled to apply to his royal father for assistance and relief. Some of the items, however, which appeared in the schedule of his debts, were so inconsistent with the moral principles of the monarch, that a direct and decided refusal was the result; and the Prince, in a moment of exasperation, determined upon a plan which he soon found it impossible to accomplish—of appropriating £40,000. a year to the liquidation of his debts. They were ultimately defrayed by Parliament.

A great deal of mischievous and malignant scandal was at this time circulated through the country, respecting the female connexions which the Prince was reported to have formed. To the first of these, with the interesting, though imprudent, Mrs. Robinson, we merely advert, for the sake of remarking, that the peculiar circumstances in which the Prince was placed offer great palliation for his conduct, even were it as darkly coloured as his enemies have represented it; but with reference to Mrs. Fitzherbert, the injury which the character of His Royal Highness sustained from malevolence and misrepresentation was much more serious. The charge, insidiously made both in and out of Parliament, and believed at one time both by the Monarch and the people, that a marriage, according to the form of the Roman Catholic Church, had

taken place between the heir-apparent and the lady alluded to, was indignantly repelled by the Prince and his friends. The infamous object of the report was sufficiently evident ; as the charge, if true, must have excluded him from the succession to the crown.

Another source of disquiet to the Monarch, and of dissatisfaction to at least one portion of the people, was the selection which the Prince had made of private and political associates. Deprived of the society of his friend and brother the Duke of York, who had been sent to Germany to complete his military education, an acquaintance ensued, which, though highly advantageous to him in one sense, was deeply to be regretted in another. From his admission into that extraordinary circle of genius, which the public character, intellect, imagination, and eloquence of Fox and Sheridan, composed, we have no doubt the Prince derived a considerable share of that political knowledge, energy, and discrimination which distinguished him in after-life ; but at the same time, his character took a tinge from their private vices and follies, which, once acquired, it is almost impossible to eradicate. The love of gaming, which was chiefly contracted by an unrestricted intercourse with these celebrated men, and which affected his popularity, and banished him for a time from the presence of his father, he no doubt subdued in time ; but a taste for expensive pleasures, a fondness for display, and an indifference for the value of money, were, in a partial degree, observable for many years after the charm had been dissolved, and the influence of his gifted, but imprudent, associates had ceased.

At the period of the illness of the King, in 1789, the advocates and friends of the Prince insisted upon his inherent abstract right to assume the reins of government ; and his claim was supported in the upper house by the Duke of York. The point was, however, strenuously resisted, notwithstanding the brilliant eloquence employed in its behalf ; and it was eventually conceded only in a very limited sense, and subjected to numerous restrictions. Happily, the providential recovery of His Majesty speedily put an end to the con-

flict. During these discussions, both the Prince and his favourite brother were positively refused admittance to the royal presence.

An event, however, of the highest importance to the Prince of Wales and to the country was soon to take place, which was hailed as an omen of reconciliation between him and his family, and as a pledge that all past differences and irregularities were to be blotted out and forgiven. This it was hoped would be effected by his marriage—to which he consented, to gratify the wishes of the empire, and which took place on the 8th of April, 1794—with his cousin, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, by the sister of George the Third, late Princess Royal of England. At this period the Prince was thirty-two, and the Princess twenty-six years of age. The wedding was celebrated, amidst the flattering hopes and unmingled joy of the nation, in the Chapel Royal at St. James's. The grants upon this occasion were, for jewels and plate, £28,000. ; for the furniture of Carlton House, £26,000 ; a dower was settled on her Royal Highness, in case of the Prince's death, of £50,000. a year ; the new debts contracted by the Prince, to the amount of £600,000., were discharged ; and an income was settled upon him of £125,000. per annum, in addition to the receipts of the Duchy of Cornwall.

The only issue of this marriage was the beloved and lamented Princess Charlotte Augusta, who was born at Carlton House, on the 7th of January, 1796. Soon after this event took place, a separation, originating, it is presumed, in the wishes of the Prince, was effected between the royal parents of the infant Princess, who remained, however, under the care of her mother for the usual period, when a separate establishment was formed for her. The feelings of aversion between the Prince and his royal partner continued to increase, and led to the most unpleasant disclosures and consequences. In 1806, a private investigation into the conduct of the Princess took place, by which it appeared, that, although there was no ground for the imputation of criminality, a degree of levity, a want of circumspection, had been evinced, which was proba-



bly the result of a continental education rather than constitutional depravity.

On the retirement of Mr. Pitt, the Prince of Wales countenanced the coalition of the Grenville party with Mr. Fox and his friends; and the following year, on the decease of that illustrious statesman, he succeeded in installing Mr. Fox in the administration of affairs. To the rejoicings that took place in 1809, in honour of the jubilee, succeeded an event pregnant with fatal consequences to the nation. The death of the Princess Amelia produced another attack of the dreadful malady with which His Majesty had been previously afflicted; and in February, 1811, the Prince of Wales opened Parliament as Regent, though with restricted powers; consulting, at the same time, the true nobility of his character, by declining any additional grant on account of his new dignity, and retaining the ministry which his father had appointed.

In the following year, on the assassination of Mr. Perceval, the Earl of Liverpool was called upon to preside over the cabinet; and shortly afterwards, the Prince Regent, relieved from restrictions, delivered his first speech from the throne. The war which, in 1793, had been declared against republican France, and which had been continued almost without interruption, was now drawing to a close; and the records of this period of the Regency exhibit an unbroken series of brilliant and unparalleled successes, terminating with the entry of the army under the Duke of Wellington into the city of Bordeaux, and the sanguinary but eventful battle of Toulouse. The abdication of Napoleon Buonaparte followed; and Louis the Eighteenth, who had been received in London with great state by the Prince Regent, was restored, under the safeguard of the fleet commanded by the Duke of Clarence, to the throne of France.

In the course of the same year (1814), the metropolis received a visit of gratitude from the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and other distinguished foreigners; and every mark of royal hospitality and popular enthusiasm was apparent in the reception and treatment of the illustrious visitors. These scenes of joy and triumph were, however, destined to be of no long continuance; for the following

year, the security of France was again endangered, and the peace of Europe disturbed, by the sudden re-appearance of Napoleon in arms. His subtle spirit and unconquerable genius had burst through every barrier, and placed him once more upon a throne—which he seized, however, only to be hurled from a more glorious height into a deeper and more desolate perdition. The triumph of Waterloo terminated in a few days his imperial career, and the narrow boundaries of St. Helena became the final stage of a spirit, in whose eyes thrones had been but toys, and to whom the destinies of empires were familiar and subservient things.

The national joy was not, however, even at this time without alloy; for its glories were accompanied by distress and discontent, by commercial difficulties, and the depression, consequent on the peace, in the value of agricultural property.

The eyes of the nation were now turned, with increased and increasing interest, to the Princess Charlotte—"the expectancy and rose of the fair state;" and the Prince Regent determined upon fulfilling the desires of the country at large, and gratifying his own paternal affection, by consenting to a marriage with Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg. This ceremony was performed on the 2d of May, 1816, and the Prince and his bride set off for Oatlands, amidst the congratulations not of the court only, but of the whole nation.

The period that now ensued may be regarded, perhaps, as the happiest, the most enviable in the life of our late sovereign. The dissensions between him and the Princess of Wales had been in some measure silenced by her Royal Highness's departure from England; the political security of the country had been almost miraculously achieved; he was virtually the reigning sovereign of the first empire in the world; he possessed the most unbounded means of gratifying his taste for splendour; and, finally, the marriage of his daughter, under circumstances the most auspicious, to one on whom his interest and affection rested, opened prospects of future pleasure and advantage both to himself and to the empire. A single cloud, a solitary shadow, was sufficient to extinguish for ever this illusory light in his own breast, and to darken the

hopes and hearts of the nation over which he presided.

This moral eclipse—the gloom of which has scarcely yet passed away—was the death of the Princess Charlotte, who expired at Claremont, after giving birth to a still-born male child, on the 6th of November, 1817; an event in itself peculiarly calculated to create impressions of sympathy and commiseration, and especially so in the case of one, who was regarded not with cold feelings of respect and attachment, but with an affection—we had almost said, idolatry—that it has been the fortune of few princes to excite.

The Prince had scarcely recovered even from the first shock of this unlooked-for and irremediable calamity, when he received news of the approaching death of his mother; an event which took place at Kew, a year and ten days after the decease of his daughter. Her Majesty died in the 75th year of her age, and in the 58th of her marriage to the King. The catalogue of royal deaths was, however, far from being completed; in January, 1820, died the Duke of Kent, of inflammation of the lungs, arising from a neglected cold; and on the 28th of February following, the venerable patriarch, the father of kings, one of the best men of his time and country, George the Third, expired, under a weight of infirmities, which few kings, and few subjects, have been tried with. The dreadful malady under which he laboured retained its hold to the last; no lucid interval either brightened or embittered the closing moments of existence.

The accession of George the Fourth to the throne of his ancestors produced only a change of title, and an increase of domestic trouble and dissension. He already possessed the essential power, and all the regalities of official station; he was now called upon to share them with one from whom he had been long separated, and to whom he could never be reunited. In the meantime his Majesty was proclaimed with the usual pomp and circumstance, and amidst expressions of congratulations from all quarters. Different scenes were, however, to follow. The Queen, on receiving a proposition from the King, through Lord Hutchinson, of an allowance of £50,000. a year, on

condition that she should continue to reside abroad, and never assume any right or title appertaining to the royal family of England, gave an instant and indignant answer to it; and immediately left France for England, where she arrived on the 5th of June, 1820. Here she was received by the disaffected and the unthinking generally, and by many persons of a better class, with triumph and enthusiasm. Hitherto nothing had been proved against her, and the hints and rumours that had been so long in circulation of her misconduct abroad were vague and unconfirmed; the erasure of her Majesty's name from the liturgy, and other steps which the King considered it necessary to resort to, were consequently regarded as marks of personal and private dislike, utterly inconsistent either with decency or justice. At length, however, the opposition to her Majesty's claims became more defined and determined. On the day subsequent to her arrival at Dover, a message was submitted to both Houses of Parliament, indicative of his Majesty's desire, that certain documents relative to the conduct of the Queen during her residence abroad, should be taken into immediate consideration; and on the 5th of July, the Earl of Liverpool introduced a "Bill of Pains and Penalties," depriving her Majesty of her rights as Queen of England, and dissolving her marriage, on the ground of criminal misconduct. Adjournments then took place to give it time to operate, and to produce a compromise; but the Queen, to whom at least the quality of courage cannot be denied, remained firm, and appeared in the House of Lords during every discussion. The bill was ultimately carried in the Upper House by a majority of nine—and abandoned.

It was one of the many misfortunes attending these unhappy proceedings, that they tended to create two distinct parties throughout the country—the King's party, and the Queen's party; and right and justice seemed to be too frequently lost sight of by both. The adherents of the Queen were the more noisy, if not the more numerous of the two. Triumphant processions extended from one end of the kingdom to the other; and the character of one party was invariably extolled at

the price of the other. Among many other attempts to do justice to the motives of the Monarch, and to place his cause fairly before the people—who were dazzled and deluded by the chivalric idea of supporting the innocent against the powerful—was a temperate and well-written comparison between “Henry the Eighth and George the Fourth,” in a volume bearing that designation. From this comparison it appears, that, in accomplishments, bravery, beauty, and generosity, the two princes were in early life upon a par. “They may be said to have lived and revelled in the smiles of beauty, to have basked and gloried in the sunshine of voluptuous enjoyment.” But the parallel soon closes. “Henry,” observes the writer, “was a notorious hypocrite, yet haughty and overbearing in his manner. His present Majesty has been universally admired for the utmost possible urbanity of demeanour; but no one has ever dared to insinuate that cant or hypocrisy is amongst the constituents of his character. Henry’s early prodigality degenerated into avarice; that of the present king has been modified by the correcting hand of time into judicious disinterested liberality. The avarice of Henry impelled him to the grossest acts of plunder and cruelty; the generosity of George the Fourth has prompted him to a thousand deeds of charity and benevolence to individuals, and munificence to the noblest public institutions of the age. The unprincipled avarice of Henry is also strikingly contrasted with the liberality of the present sovereign to his wife—to a wife, too, with whom, smarting under embarrassed circumstances and irritated feelings, he was upon the worst of terms—when he took the enormous debts upon himself—when, as Lord Castlereagh observed, ‘he made sacrifices which no other husband in the land, had he been brought before parliament, would have been called upon to make.’”—“It is too well known,” the writer continues, “that in his match with the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, his affections were not engaged; but there is not a shadow of proof that his personal treatment of his royal consort was ever, in the slightest degree, derogatory to the character of a prince, of a gentleman, or of a man. Without the

slightest imputation on the fame of the Princess, it is infinitely more easy to imagine, and infinitely more candid to presume, that the Prince her husband, had strong, substantial, unconquerable motives for inducing a separation between them, than to admit the possibility that a man of polished education and manners, of amiable mind, of elevated notions of delicacy and honour, as the Prince was universally allowed to be, should causelessly desert an innocent, virtuous, and estimable wife. Such conduct in such a man would indeed be so gross and palpable a transgression of the common laws of nature, that, unless, by the most perverted intellect, the idea cannot for a single moment be received or entertained.”

The coronation of the King now became a subject of much interest; and here another difficulty presented itself—the Queen claiming a participation in the ceremony; which was, however, distinctly and decidedly refused. She next demanded a suitable place to see the ceremony. This favour was not conceded. To the regret of the whole nation, and contrary, we trust, to the advice of her adherents, she thought proper to present herself at the gate of Westminster Abbey early in the morning of the day fixed for the event—and was refused; a humiliation, from the effects of which her spirit never recovered. The remembrance of that moment must have haunted her during the few short days of her after-life. She died in less than three weeks from that eventful morning, on the 7th of August, 1821; but—

“Even in her ashes lived her wonted fires,”

and her funeral, from the mistaken sympathy of the people, instead of being a sign of peace, and a scene of solemnity, became one of disgraceful riot, disorder, and bloodshed.

The ceremony from which the Queen had been thus excluded was performed on the 19th of July, amidst a scene of unprecedented pomp and magnificence. Few that witnessed the superb spectacle will forget it. His Majesty was crowned in the old crown of Edward the Confessor; and a new and more splendid one was made for him to put on after the cere-

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of Lunenburgh, and his noble brothers." The answering post from Carlton Palace brought His Majesty's commands that the work should be dedicated to him. The authoress, therefore, not presuming "to bandy argument with her sovereign," in due respect for the royal mandate, when the work was published, inscribed it according to the honour his graciousness so betowed upon her.

The romance of *Duke Christian* has now been with the public several years; and is translated into two of the continental languages, therefore needs no advertisement from our hands. But we cannot refrain from noticing, on our own intimacy with the history of the times it relates to, the accuracy of its principal events, with those of the annals of the period, both in Germany and in England. Duke Christian himself was not only the bravest captain of his time, but the most magnanimous prince, and the most accomplished gentleman. Therefore the royal descendant of such a man might, indeed, nobly think, that a pen employed

in picturing so exemplary a character, could never, on any account, be suspected by an ingenuous public to be a flatterer; the biographer of virtue being at the same time its teacher; and such teaching could never be translated into the baseness of a court parasite! The ingenuous part of the British public did think so. But there were others, of a different description, who concluded, as the authoress had apprehended might happen, on account of the personal dedication. Yet these must be sought for amongst those readers who were not themselves sufficiently acquainted with the histories of Germany to know, that, in shaping her romance on the annals of certain heroic princes of the line of Brunswick, she wrote "the truth, and nothing but the truth." The late Dowager Empress of Russia (as a woman of letters) was so pleased with the accuracy and style of the work, as to have had her high estimation of it conveyed, in the most gratifying manner, to its writer.

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